

Focus on

◇ The President's habit of reducing every issue to a test of personal loyalty was no help at all to some Democratic congressional visitors

who came to the White House recently to learn more about the Administration's proposed 10 per cent tax increase. They were told, *reductio ad Lyndon*, that the choice before Congress was simply between "Ho Chi Minh or me," the all-purpose Presidential dichotomy these days, but hardly anything to write home about in answer to heavy mail from constituents opposed to any tax hike, whether 10 or 6 per cent. The distinction between presenting a case for supporting American fighting men in Vietnam and supporting "me" is one which LBJ, given his onetime mastery of the subtle arts of Capitol Hill persuasion, might be expected to appreciate. But adversity does not wear well with Mr. Johnson, whose visitors now hear him compare his Administration to that of Abraham Lincoln rather than Franklin D. Roosevelt, model of the early Great Society years. Meanwhile, some congressional doves would like to make the tax issue another kind of test, envisioning an ad hoc coalition of liberal doves and Republican hawks to deliver what in effect would be a no-confidence vote on Administration conduct of the war. Despite such efforts, however, passage of some form of tax increase, probably 6, possibly 8 per cent, is virtually certain.

◇ Mr. Johnson's displeasure over the Vice President's call for a domestic Marshall Plan had more to do with the timing than the substance of Mr. Humphrey's Detroit speech. With his tax increase pending in Congress, the President is de-emphasizing domestic talk by Administration spokesmen, so that the Humphrey speech, not cleared by the White House, is said to have triggered the most seismographic West Wing eruption since the day Robert Kennedy came to visit following his return from Europe. Fortunately for the Vice President, he was still on the road when Mr. Johnson learned of

the speech, and the order to cease-and-desist came by way of a White House messenger. Having dropped his Marshall planning for the moment, Mr. Humphrey is confining his public alarm on urban unrest to *de rigueur* liberal reproof of Congress for purported insensitivity to big city problems. Why this approach to obtaining congressional support for Administration programs is considered any sounder than the Marshall Plan proposal is a matter for expert Johnsonologists to ponder; but, in any case, the Vice President hasn't been told to stop or have other Administration spokesmen laying down the same line. Under another name, Mr. Humphrey's massive urban spending proposal will at the appropriate time be lifted by the President for incorporation into the 1968 Democratic platform.

◇ Once criticized for having no position on Vietnam, Governor Romney now has several. The Michigan governor's oscillation only reflects both sides of a widening division here between those Republicans who want the President to win the war and those who simply want to end it. Nor is it mere coincidence that the Romney switch came after a visit to Washington, where his speech to congressional summer interns dovetailed neatly into the position now taken by Senator Thruston Morton ("If you don't like Romney's Vietnam policy," observed one intern after the speech, "just wait a minute"). Yet this embarrassment of policy riches has done little to relieve a growing sense of urgency surrounding Romney for President campaign efforts here. Despite Len Hall's professional managerial optimism, it is known that Romney operatives have been badgering prominent Republican officeholders and party officials, urging public commitment now rather than later. The fact that Senator Percy not only refused to make such an open declaration but instead accelerated his own Presidential campaign timetable has brought once-warm Romney-Percy relations to a frigid low. Some more jaundiced Romneyites even regard Governor Nelson Rockefeller's supposedly benign offices with suspicion. Who started this Rockefeller-Reagan business they ask. (Who indeed? California certainly denies it, and no one on Capitol Hill, where rumor-tracing is a specialty, can locate its origin.)

—CATO

drag of Congress, the apathy or powerlessness of the public, and the sniping of opponents. Thus on August 18 Mr. Johnson, without uttering a word of explicit criticism, made it appear that a dilatory Congress is really responsible for the urban troubles, by having failed to enact the carefully organized Presidential program on crime, rats, economic opportunity, Model Cities, renewal and rent supplements. And—waiting for this nearly to end, as if it were a mere part of an answer to a chance question (#10) put by Sarah McClendon—the President threw all the congressional critics of his Vietnam policy, dove and hawk alike, back on the defensive by a sudden gambit. Under the Truman and Eisenhower precedents, Mr. Johnson rests his authority

to conduct his war on a congressional joint resolution—in his case, the so-called Tonkin Gulf Resolution. If Congress challenges this authority on constitutional grounds, or any other grounds objects to the pursuit of war, it could at any time, the President murmured, "withdraw that authority by just passing a resolution." Then maneuver, of course, is more slick than bold, since Mr. Johnson well knew this one, too, he could not lose.

Squirm, Baby, Squirm!

Busy fortnight for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee! In its newsletter, SNCC violently attacked Israel, Zionism and Jews in general. Its claims

(neatly coordinated with the current Moscow line): 1) That Israel "captured the Arab homes and land through terror, force and massacres" and transformed the Gaza Strip into another Dachau by atrocities against the Arabs; 2) That dark-skinned Jews are treated as "second-class citizens" in Israel; 3) That the Rothschilds, those age-old International Bankers, were party to a Great Conspiracy to create the "illegal" state of Israel and are now depriving oppressed Africans of that continent's mineral wealth. A cartoon in the newsletter showed Moshe Dayan with dollar signs instead of stars on his general's uniform; another has a hand, marked with the Star of David and a dollar sign, tightening a noose around the unlikely necks of Nasser and Cassius Clay. Ralph Featherstone, a SNCC official, explained that his organization isn't really anti-Semitic, but opposes "only Jewish oppressors," i.e., the Israelis and "those Jews in the little Jew shops in the ghettos". Dissatisfied with that quick qualifier, Theodore Bikel and Harry Golden quit SNCC—because of its anti-Semitism, not because it has turned violent, please.

Unperturbed publicly (privately, a columnist reported, SNCC took a look at its dwindling treasury

and told Stokely Carmichael to take it easy), the group turned to other matters. Rap Brown announced that Br'er Stokely was due in North Vietnam at any moment "to investigate and see for himself the savage aggression being carried out against that country by the United States." Brown explained that we are "experimenting with weapons there that would be effective in destroying black people in the ghetto without damaging the property." A few days later, SNCC organizer George Ware trumpeted that "If Mr. Carmichael falls down the stairs or chokes on a chicken bone, we will know it was the CIA that did it." (SNCC seems not to have made up its mind which is the *fons et origo* of all wicked conspiracies—the International Bankers or the CIA). Ware tossed in a casual threat on the life of President Johnson, but nobody paid much attention. He was later arrested under the Tennessee sedition law.

And then Brown—free on bail on charges of inciting to riot in Maryland—gave the biggest boost of the year to gun control legislation by letting it be known that he was carrying a gun—on an interstate plane flight, and so he was arrested for violating the National Firearms Act. SNCC couldn't raise his \$25,000 bail. Bail was reduced to \$15,000, after which Brown, freed, said that "justice is a joke in America" and was probably right. And it transpired that Brown is under lucrative contract to write a book for Dial Press "on his philosophy about racial questions." It was also learned that Carmichael has been getting \$1,500 to \$1,800 per speech on university campuses.

For Mao's Sake

East Europe reproduces an interview with Dr. Miroslav Kriz, trainer of the Czechoslovak girls' football (soccer) team when it returned to Prague last autumn from a three-week tour of China, during which it played seven games with the Chinese girl's team. During this visit, the Great Cultural Revolution was just getting going on the athletic front.

Q. What was the reception like?

A. We were received in a friendly manner. About the only difficulty arose when one of our players wanted to photograph a street demonstration of the Red Guard. We were told this was forbidden. In Mukden maybe as many as 1,000 young boys and girls with red arm bands squeezed into the hotel lounge waving red booklets and shouting quotations from Mao Tse-tung. But our guides told us afterwards that they were merely re-naming the hotel "Hotel East Wind."

Q. And how did you play?

A. I would not like to evaluate the whole tour. I consider only the first four matches as regular. The remaining three were played during the Cultural Revolution and sporting conditions had deteriorated.

